# PETERS ENLARGEMENT VPON THE PRAYERS OF THE CHVRCH.

Robert

*By* Master HARRIS.

*The third Edition.*

PSAL[illegible]

*The Righteous cry and [illegible] Lord heareth and deliuereth them out of all their trouble[illegible]*

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# To the Reader.

THis Sermon (thus made vp with mine owne and others notes) I now ſubmit to Authority and Cenſure: for ſubſtance, I yeeld heere is no more then what was deliuered; whether no leſſe I haue not now to ſay: for circumſtance (I yeeld to the allegation) I acknowledge it ſeaſonable. The times ſhall euer be cleared by prayer whenſoeuer they looke ſadly vpon vs. Our Brethren abroad cry ſtill in the Churches words; *The harueſt is paſt, and the Summer is ended, and we are not holpen*, and we (me thinkes) ſhould adde with *Ieremie* verſe 21. *I am ſore vexed for the hurt of the daughter of my people, I am heauy, aſtoniſhment hath taken me*; *Is there no balme at Gilead, &c.* At home howſoeuer the Lord hath beene gratious to vs in the ſcarcitie, yet we may *Ier.8.20.*

in moſt places, take vp the Prophets words
*Hag.* 2. 20. in another ſence, *Is the ſeede yet in the Barne? as yet the Trees haue not beene deliuered of their burthen?* Looke into the 65. *Pſalme*,
*Pſal.* 65. 9, 10, 11. and thou ſhalt finde that it is the Lord that findes both ground and ſeede, that giues both growth and ripening to the Corne, and therefore we ſhould wait vpon him with our preſents of praiſe and praier; this were enough to make vs pray, but this is the leaſt of many motiues, for *Reader* thou ſeeſt the times, the World is now all eare and tongue, the moſt giuen with the *Athenians* to little elſe
*Demonol. l. 3. c. 1. ad finem.* then to heare and tell newes, ( vncertaine newes, the Authour of all lies as his Maieſtie hath told vs ) the reſt are willing alſo to heare, and to heare Gods Truth, not Fables, and therein they doe but as Saint *Iames* would haue them, ſo as they would adde doing to hearing as hee commands. But alas, whilſt wee onely profeſſe and diſcourſe of Religion, wee driue the practiſe of Religion out of the world, as one too iuſtly
Sir *W. Ral.* preface. complaines. It is lamentable to conſider the little vſe that is made of Gods Ordinances in moſt places; Preachers too often [illegible]

tremble to ſpeake it) bee vſed like poſt horſes, ſpurd on till they bee ſpent, and then a freſh is called for, in the meane the world ſits ſtill and thinkes to bee ſaued for hearing. *Reader*, Mourne for this, weepe for this, for this boades a Iudgement, the Lord will reckon for the bloud of his Prophets ſpent as well as ſhed. To theſe reaſons, it will not bee hard for thee to adde more, looke within thee, and round about thee, and ſo ſtirre vp thy ſelfe to this exerciſe of Prayer, an exerciſe (I can aſſure thee) of vnſpeakable ſtrength and comfort, an exerciſe without which thou canſt not liue, and by which thou mayeſt liue in the mouth of death. Beleeue it, wert thou in an eſtate, more deſperate then death, in a place worſe then hell; yet if there thou couldeſt pray truly, thou ſhouldeſt finde comfort and ſtrength beyond hope, for Praier is better then our hopes, and yet God is better to vs then our praier. Firſt, for that which is publique, follow him who was no time-ſeruer, make no ſmall account of publique prayers. Secondly, for priuate, pauſe before thou ſpeake, remember who ſpake it, if a man would

not deliuer an Oration to a Prince *ex tempore* and ſuddenly, it will not become vs to open our mouthes raſhly before our maker, ſecondly, keepe touch with God: firſt, for extraordinarie and incidentall occaſions, bee ſure to keepe thy ſelfe in ſuch a ſtate and condition of ſoule, as that euer thou canſt recollect thy ſelfe, and call in all the powers of ſoule for this buſineſſe vpon a ſhort warning: ſecondly, for ordinary times, ſo neere as may bee, faile not of thine houre: when the Clocke ſtrikes the Schollar runnes to his booke, thou muſt to God leauing all, there tender thy ſelfe, though not alwaies alike fit, and ſo bee in the way and place of preferment: if words will not come, ſigh, *God heares the ſighing of his priſoners*: if thou canſt not ſigh, breathe, God hath an eare for that, *Lam.* 3: 56. Howeuer, there bee, there ſtand, and the childe that ſtands before his father and appeares in his place at ſupper-time with his trencher in his hand, ſpeakes with his countenance, and ſpeedes accordingly:

M. *Gr.* he was wiſe who ſaid, They pray not altogether of faſhion, who ſee their infirmitie in praying and are grieued for it; the worſt

prayers

prayers that wee make ( to our owne ſenſe I meane ) ſpeede euer beſt, and then wee pray moſt happily, when wee ariſe moſt humbled.

Thirdly, when thou haſt prayed, doe not as children, who neuer looke after their arrow; but as *Daniel cap.* 9. 1. take notice of thine enlargements in prayer, and of thy ſucceſſe after, write downe time and place as the Prophet doth, and ſo helpe thy ſelfe in future times by former experiments. I ſee this Porch growes wide, and therefore I will conclude, if thou bee acquainted with prayer, thou knoweſt there is more in it then can be expreſſed; if thou be not acquainted, grow acquainted, and thou ſhalt finde me true, if thou wanteſt further motiues and directions, I commend ( in this haſte ) to thee who art but a poore Engliſh priuate man; Firſt, for the promiſes ( whereof the heart muſt chew before prayer ) the *Treatiſe of faith.* Secondly, for motiues, the *Epiſtle to the key of Heauen.* Thirdly, for caſes of Conſcience and directions after praier, 2. *Treatiſes* on *Eph.* 6. *viz. The ſpirituall Armour*, and now after directions and exhortations, what remaines but practiſe, in ſtead of o-

thers

thers pratling and enterdealing in State busi-nesse; doe thou pray, pray for thy Soueraigne, for his seed, for the Churches, for thy selfe, for thy charge, and vse no more words against mens sinnes, then thou wilt make praiers for their soules in secret, if thou wilt haue comfort in thy words: Thus much of this: Now *Reader* to thee, if these plaine notes passe the Presse, know that I neither did entend their publishing before I preached them, nor can intend notwithstanding their refining since; if the world may be bettered by them, or by any thing I can doe, I haue enough, onely I desire mercy and equity from my friends; those notes of mine which they haue, I will my selfe (after my publike Ministery) now shortly reuise, let no man doe so ill an office as to thrust out other mens notes without their priuitie, especially his, who can doe nothing worthy this Age.

Ro. Harris.

# PETERS ENLARGEMENT.

Acts 12. 6, 7.

*And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chaines, and the Keepers before the doore, kept the prison.*

*And behold, the Angell of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying; Arise up quickly: And his chaines fell off from his hands, &c.*

THis is a story of *Peters*, 1. Imprisonment. 2. Enlargement. With the cause of the one, and meanes of the other. *Herod* having vexed some, slaine a second, now commits the third; and all this to gratifie the Jewes. *Peter* thus committed, is bailed by the Church, or rather removed and freed by petition, they pray earnestly for him, in the 5. verse, and they speed as happily,

happily, whileſt they are praying, God giues in the priſoner amongſt them. The manner of his deliuery is here reported, and that was very ſtrange, beyond *Herods* purpoſe, the priſoners expectation, the Keepers meaning, all mens hopes: *Herod* held his purpoſe hee had begun, and the next morning hee meant an end of him, *Peter* had made his concluſion; to morrow (thinkes he) (for meſſages paſt betweene him and the Church, which ſpent this night in prayer for him, and therefore knew the danger) I muſt be put to it, therefore I will ſtrengthen my ſelfe to night: The Keepers ſtood vpon their guard, and reſolued that no *Peter* ſhould paſſe them: yet is *Peter* deliuered, and how I pray you? God remoues all impediments, for nothing was in readineſſe.

First, for man, entrance was there none, therefore God ſends an Angell, and there was no ſtop againſt him.

Next, in the darke it was hard to finde which was which; God directs an Angell to him, and he comes vpon him, and miſſes not the man, though bound to the ſame chaine with two others, as in ſtrict imprisonments they vſed to doe.

Thirdly, they were in the darke, and that was ill for noiſe; The Angell brings his darke lanthorne with him, and *ſhines* to *Peter* and none elſe.

Fourthly, the priſoner can doe little for himſelfe, he is *aſleepe*, the Angell *wakes* him; hee is *laid*, the Angell *raiſes* him; he is *amazed*, the Angell *directs* him; hee is *bound*, the Angell *vnlies* him; hee knowes not *where he is*, the Angell *guides* him,

is to passe through sundry difficulties, the Angell conducts him through them all, and so dismisses him.

Wee will vse no more words about a plaine Storie, but acquaint you with our meditations: they containe the successe of the Churches prayers; *they praied for Peter*, the Angell thereupon is sent to *Peter*: where see, 1. *How the Angell findes him*: 2. *How the Angell deliuers him*.

For the first, he findes him *sleeping*, in the midst of feares and foes: From whence was this sleepe? was it worldly sorrow that caused it, or was it carnall securitie?

*Answ.* In doubtfull things charitie supposes the best; so should we: worldly sorrow causes sleepe, but how? when it is not extreme, and that sleepe is ioyned with starting: carnall securitie will cause sleepe, but why should we charge *Peter* with that at this time; his sleepe came from a better cause, he was at peace with God, he had the Churches praiers for him, the cause for him, his conscience for him, God and his Angels for him; hee could die but once, and for one death hee was prepared: hence his boldnes before, Chapters 4. and 5. hence his confidence, here he resolued with *Dauid, I will lay me downe and sleepe*, and withall, God gaue rest to his beloued, as it is in the *Psalmes*, rest more then ordinary to his minde, to his body: hence the Angell can hardly awake him, and being awaked, he is not terrified as a guilty person would haue beene in this case: doe then but consider, 1. The man, 2. his behauiour in like cases, 3. The time and

circumstances. 4. The exercises of the Church for him. 5. The messenger, and message sent to him. 6. The manner of his behaviour when he is awaked, and you will see that his sleepe grew not from distemper, but from strength of faith and comfort.

Now to the Points.

*Doctr.* 1. Where first from the order, see the power of ioynt prayers, they beare downe all before them, and preuaile in heauen and earth: as the Word that comes from heauen, prospers in the thing whereunto it is sent; so the word that goes to heauen, the prayers of the Church strike vp to God, there they lie at his gates, and neuer will away without their errand, and when they are answered, then they come downe with authoritie, and reigne ouer all impediments below; witnesse this Story: *Peter* is committed, the persecuters are resolute, the foes many, the friends few, meanes none but God, to God the Church goes; the enemie plots, the Church prayes; they shut the prison doores, the Church opens heauens doores; for there's old tugging for the prisoner, but the Church winnes him. God, to let them see what prayers be, sends him to them while they are praying; there, saith God, (if you will take no denyall) there he is; thereby pointing vs to the meanes of his deliuerance: we need not many words for proofe of this: *Isay* saith, *The prayer of one righteous man preuailes much*; if of one, what of twentie? what of an hundred? and he instances in *Eliah*, *He alone could open and shut heauen*, then well may many open and shut prison on earth: may adde further, the ioynt prayers of

Esay 55.

Iames 5.

vnbelieuers and hypocrites haue done much: when heathenish *Niniue* fasted and prayed, God heard; when false *Rehoboam* humbled himselfe and his people, God was intreated; how much more shall the faithfull prayers of the Church preuaile, preuaile (I say) both for the preuenting and remouing euils, and obtaining and keeping of good things: What shall we instance the life of *Asa*, *Iehosaphat*, *Hezekiah*, when was it otherwise, when did the Church of God euer ioyne in a common petition to God, but they sped? no instance to the contrarie. Ionah 3. 2 Chron. 12.

No marueil, this exercise is well grounded and warranted, it hath the warrant of a Precept: 1. *Pray for one another; call vpon me.* *Reas.* 1. Iames 5.

2. The warrant of a promise, *I will deliuer thee.* Psal. 50.

3. The warrant of experience, neuer any yet vsed it, but they preuailed.

Prayers are presents very welcome to God, hee prefers them to all sacrifices, being immediate worships of his Maiestie; Let me heare thy voice, it is pleasant: No father loues the voice of his children, like as God loues the voice of his Church; *Tis his musicke and perfume,* Reu. 5. 8. *Reas.* 2. Cant. 2. 14.

3. The parties are very deare who tender them, God loues his Church aboue all creatures, he gaue his Sonne for her, and therefore her suites shall haue acceptance: *Let mee see thy face, its comely; Esther* neuer pleased *Ahasuerus* so well as the Church pleaseth Christ. *Reas.* 3. Cant. 2. 14.

4. The parties from and through whom they are presented, please: they are inflicted and abbetted by the holy Ghost, Rom. 8. rendred by Christ Iesus, *Reas.* 4. Rom. 8.

Iesus, and shall these be denied? adde to this?

5. The party to whom they are directed, to God, who is all truth, mercy, grace, wisdome, power, and shall not these preuaile? Praiers set God on worke, and all in God, his wisdome, his power, his Angels, and what then can hinder?

*Vse* 1. Looke backward, and call to minde your sinne this day, see, many a *Peter* hath beene in prison, and praiers were not made by the Church; many a member sicke, and praiers were not made by the Elders; yea many a Church distressed, *Bohemia* afflicted, the *Palatinate* and *Valtoline* distressed, yet we did not pray; the enemie could curse, but we did not pray, and therefore how iustly might God distresse and leaue vs destitute of his helpe, and the Churches praiers?

2. Looke forward, and preserue and improue this your interest in God, let no *Peter*, no Preacher, no Christian, no neighbour lie in the chaines by you, (whether in the chaines of sickenesse, or pouerty, or debt, or paine, or sinne, or temptation) but doe you repriue him: you haue a key that will open any locke, a medicine that will heale any wound, a weapon that will preuaile in any place; draw this weapon, vse this medicine: if men be sicke, pray them whole; if poore, pray them rich; if sad, pray them merry.

But is this so easily done? yes verily by the whole Church; as it is for the outward estate when one is very poore, it is hard for two or three to set him vp againe, but nothing for a thousand; and when one is in a pit, it is much for one, but not for many

many to pull him out: see here, it is long of vs that men lie so long vnder their burdens: would wee ioyntly commend them to God, our prayers would take, mens chaines would off, true spirituall chaines: Why, if so, were it not worth the while? *Ob.* What, may we ease our brethren of temptations, of passions, of lusts, and will wee not? *Ans.* But for outward crosses, saith not Saint *Iames*, let the prayers of the Church heale the sicke; saith not the storie, the praiers of the Church procured *Peters* liberty? But *Ob.* say they be not alwaies deliuered; yet it is good to *Ans.* get the crosses mitigated, sanctified, sweetned, and something will be done if we pray; doe this then or nothing: perhaps you will excuse other negligences: you would visit your sicke neighbour, but you question his disease, your welcome; you would releeue your poore neighbours, but you haue it not; why there is no Christian man but hee hath an interest in God, a spirit of prayer; lift vp a prayer for thy brethren, if thou canst doe nothing else, and this will doe thee and him good: prayer in this case for others, is a cleerer euidence of grace, than for our selues.

Here is comfort and encouragement; comfort for our selues, if members of the Church, if wee bleed with her, if wee pray for her, if we say, *If I forget thee, O Ierusalem, then let my right hand forget her cunning*: the comfort is great; wee haue that which Saint *Paul* thirsted for, the prayers of the Church; and this is a priuilege worth ten worlds, and a comfort beyond all apprehension, when a man lookes round about him and can say, there is

a towne, I haue some prayers there, there is another, I haue stocke going there, nay in euery Shire, euery Nation, some that be enlarged when I am barren, some quickened when I am dull, and I am an aduenturer in the Churches ship, I haue a stocke in her treasure, and an interest in her prayers; this keepes the head aboue water, and preserues from sinking.

4. For encouragement, to pray for the Church: would Gods people enter into a holy league, and tye themselues in their seuerall closets, to spend so much time weekely, or daily in prayer, for some particular person, or place, Church, or Nation; I wonder how they should misse; tell me where euer the Churches ioynt prayers did euer mis-carrie, or proue abortiue; in what place, in what case, for what people? prayers haue been made for men out of the Church, and haue sped, witnesse *Niniue*; for men in the Church (good men, bad men) and haue sped; prayers haue beene made by Land, and haue preuailed; on the Seas by *Ionah*, and haue sped, they haue preuailed vnder the earth, in dens, and dungeons, and caues; prayers haue beene made for sicke men, and haue holpe them, for dying men, for poore men, for captiues, for prisoners, and haue holpen; for men against persecution, against temptation, against sorrow, against beasts, against men, against deuils: prayers haue beene omnipotent heretofore, why not now?

*ob.* *Ob.* Why now, if we were as others, Gods hand (we know) is not shortened, his eare not heauy, but our sins, our crying ripe sins, hinder good things from vs.

*Ans.*

*Ans.* Why therefore set against those sinnes by prayer, cast out your owne, crie downe other mens, out-crie them. *Ans.*

*Ob.* Oh but they crie loud. *Ob.*

*Ans.* Yet praier hath the stronger voice, the bloud of Christ speakes better things than bloudie sinnes, &c. Let *Sodome* yeeld ten holy men, and shee shall be spared, let one *Elijah* stand vp for stiffe-necked Israel, and one *Amos* plead for rebellious Iudah, and God will shew mercie. *Ans.* Gen. 18. Iames 5. Amos 7. 1, 2.

*Ob.* True indeed, if we had such as they, but our prayers are weake and faint. *Ob.*

*Ans.* 1. They were men subiect to like passions. 2. The prayer of the righteous is preuailing. 3. These here mentioned were new conuerts, yet preuailed with God for *Peter*. *Ans.* Iam. 5. 16, 17.

*Ob.* Oh but here the whole Church ioyned: if all *Israel* might meete from *Dan* to *Beersheba*, there might be some hope. *Ob.*

*Ans.* We may, and doe more than these might; 1. We may meet in publike assemblies euery Sabbath: 2. These were but few that liued in the darke, and met in the night, and in *Hesters* time in their seuerall families, and the whole State was then against the truth, and against the Scriptures, and all Religion was disgraced; yet then they preuailed, much more we now. *Ans.*

*Ob.* But now it is too late, many Churches abroad be quite scattered, many men at home haue their backes and hearts quite broken, with wants, temptations, discouragements. *Ob.*

*Ans.* Whilest God sais in his word, it is not too late, *Ans.*

late; God is vſed to ſee men ſinking before hee ſets in, their extremitie is his opportunitie; when *Peter* is within one night of the ſword, then is his time.

*Ob.* But I haue waited, and ſee no ſucceſſe?

*Anſw.* So did the Church, they pray for *Peter* this weeke, the next, and the next; the doores be ſtill ſhut, the chaines be ſtill on; well, now they haue but one night more to wait, they wait that, but ere morning all is wonne: If then we haue but one day, one night, one houre to ſpend; hope, pray, wait, that day, that night, that houre, God will be ſeene in the mount: deliuerance ſhall come, if prayer goe on the errand; it euer was ſo, euer ſhall be ſo, diſpute not but beleeue; there is who praies and ſpeaks not, and there is too that ſpeakes, who prayes not; if thou wilt pray, thou muſt open thy needs to God, as thy Father, through Chriſt, God-man, as thy Mediatour, from God the holy Ghoſt, as the inditer of thy prayers: if thou wilt pray, thy heart muſt be 1. emptied of purpoſes of ſinne: 2. broken: 3. purged from guile by faith; which faith muſt then work, before thou beginneſt; ſay with *Dauid*, *I will call, and God will anſwer mee*; and when thou haſt done, conclude, I haue ſpoken, and ſhalt in due time and manner be anſwered; thus doe, and be ſure that thou neither beginne nor end a lawfull petition (of ſuch only we ſpeake) before thou art aware, for faith enter thy ſuite, and end, and ſubſcribe it, and thou preuaileſt.

Gen. 22.

Pſal. 66. 18.

Pſal. 86. 7. And the 56. 9.

Now to particulars.

*How findes the Angell Peter?* Sure he cannot ſleepe this night, being vpon his life to morrow, and in all likelihood

likelihood knowing of it by the Church, howsoeuer, not sure of life one day to an end, but like enough to be sent for at an houres warning, as *Iohn Baptists* head was. Notwithstanding all this, *Peter* sleeps as soundly as euer in his life, and wakes without terrour; whence was this, from corruption? no; from naturall courage? no, when *Peter* was younger, and therefore naturally bolder, he was a distard: whence then? consider the reasons before, and it will be found, that it was from speciall comfort and confidence in God, which comfort most attends prisons and persecutions: here see the strength of spirituall peace and comfort.

The Lord hath comforts for his children, that will quiet and support them in any feares and straits, his consolations will make a man sleepe without a bed; liue almost without a soule: They will make one bold in danger, quiet in trouble, liue in the iawes of death: *The ioy of the Lord is strong*, saith *Nehemiah*, strong indeed that will carrie a man ouer all: *Peter* had a strong heart, that can thus sleep, thus wake, that can looke vpon Chaines, vpon Prisons, vpon Tyrants, vpon Torments, vpon Angels, (good and bad) and neuer breake his sleepe for the matter. *Pauls* ioyes were strong, that made him *sing in the stocks*: *Dauids* faith strong, that made him say, *I will lye downe and sleepe, I will not feare though ten thousand rise vp against me*: those were strong and strange ioyes that supported *Dauid* in all his feares, and made him say, *In the multitude of my thoughts, thy comforts glad my soule*; Those strong that triumphed ouer, rackings, mockings, scour-

*Doctr.* 2.

Nehem. 8.

Act. 16.

Psal. 3.

Psal. 94. 19.



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scourgings, &c. as in the eleuenth to the *Hebrewes*.

1. Q. Whence these comforts. *Quest.* But whence comes their strength?

*Reas.* 1. Because they be Gods ioyes, the ioyes of the Spirit, deriued immediatly from the fountaine; and things be purest and strongest there.

2. Because spirituall, for as spirits are more actiue and powerfull than bodies, so spirituall things than bodily and naturall.

3. These ioyes are most certaine and durable, these ouercome and out-liue all crosses, and all other comforts.

4. They are all-sufficient, and borrow no helpe from creatures: Nature and Art worke with instruments, and by meanes, they cannot support without meat, strengthen without sleepe, giue sleepe without warmth, nor warmth without a bed, &c. But God can beyond meanes, without means, work comfort, make one see in the darke, liue in death.

2. Q. What. *Answ.* 1. *Quest.* But what be these comforts of God?

*Ans.* Precious promises applyed by God in due season, and brought home to the heart, which reuiue the spirits more than any balme; and these promises come thicke vpon *Peter* now: He thinketh, hath not God said, that *the sighing of prisoners comes to him*, that *he bottles vp all our teares*, that *we should cast our care vpon him, and he will care for vs*, that *in six and seuen troubles, they shall not come neere me*, that *in fire and water he will be with me*, and did not I heare my Sauiour say, *Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousnesse sake*; reade not I how *Dauid* said, *I will lie downe and sleepe*, and therefore I will doe so too.

2. Streng-

2. Strengthening graces, God powres the ſpirit of faith, patience, power, courage, into his, in due time; and they raiſe the heart, as wine the fainting ſpirits; euery ſauing grace is healing, is ſtrengthening.

3. Hourely experience of Gods care and prouidence; and a childe neuer ſees the loue of his mother ſo much as when he is ſicke; ſo Gods children, &c.

Now that makes them plucke vp their feet with *Iacob*, and ſay with *Paul*, *I know whom I haue truſted*; and with the Church, *Thou wilt guide vs to death*; and after (as *Dauid* addes) *receiue to glory*.

4. Speciall peace of conſcience, and ioy of the holy Ghoſt, by new expreſſions of Gods fauour, and rauiſhments of heauen: then God opens heauen, and they ſee their life and crowne, and ſo are carried ouer all.

*Queſt.* When doth God thus comfort his? Q. When.

*Anſ.* When they moſt need it, as then the mother brings out her preſerues, when the childe is ſicke: firſt, when they be moſt humbled and emptie of themſelues; therefore after greateſt humiliations come greateſt conſolations, as *Dauid*, *Abraham*, and others euer found.

2. But ſpecially in the day of triall and perſecution, the more the Deuill beſtirres him, the more God beſtirres him: thus the ſweeteſt nights that euer *Iacob* ſpent were in the field, and ſo for *Peter*; and when had *Dauid* thoſe large affections to riſe at midnight, when was the Word ſo ſweet, but when his troubles were bitter? Gen. 28. and 32. chap. Pſal. 119.

The Vſe is double, 1. Get theſe comforts, we get Vſe.

*aqua vitæ* ready against qualmes; Bezoar-stone, and cordials against fits: but the cordials that helpe all, is the holy Ghost, the Comforter; Art is blind, and often posed; Nature weake, and often foiled; (like a bow that must not be drawne beyond compasse) only grace and spirituall comfort is inuincible: get this, and you may sleepe in a dungeon, liue in the darke, want all, and yet haue all; want these, and a flea may breake your sleepe; and a hand-writing dash your mirth in the midst of all friends.

Dan. 5.

2. Let such as haue spirituall hearts thus affected, stay themselues here; feare not pouertie, there be comforts beyond the paine of famine; feare not sicknesse, there be comforts beyond all fits of sicknesse: feare not death, feare not chaines, feare not any thing that you can or shall suffer: Not any thing? Why, a man is subiect to racking, to burning, &c. yet feare not, and why? the Lord hath comfort in all, and aboue all tribulations: when he cals a *Saul* to a crowne, he makes him another man: so when he cals a man to a chaine, *Peter* is not the man in prison, he was out of prison; at the first he was fearefull of a wenches word, after he was willing, yet flesh hung backe, *Iohn* the last Chapter, verse 18. But when put vpon it, heare his voice, see his face; he can be as quiet, as comfortable, as well in prison as euer.

Reuel. 2. 10.

1 Cor. 1.

Act. 5. 29. 4. 13.

*Ob.* *Ob.* Oh but I finde my selfe afraid of words?

*Answ.* *Answ.* So was *Peter* at first.

*Ob.* *Ob.* Oh but, saith our Sauiour, beware of men.

*Answ.* *Answ.* No man so malicious as God is mercifull, so perillous as God is pitifull. Oh but say we liued

where

where we should lie in cold irons, in the darke, be halfe pined, ſtarued; who can beare theſe? *Peter* can, any can, when God cals them to it.

O but ſay we were put to the fiery triall, flames are intolerable and mercileſſe. O but flames are in Gods hands, *Daniel* 3. Chapter: againe, Martyrs haue had more comfort there, than in all their liues before. Oh but ſome of them haue cried out of paines: And doe not men ſo who die in their beds too? but God hath borne them through theſe, and made them amends.

O get then inward ſtrength, and that will ouercome all feares, all torments; conclude wee with that good Martyr, if God call euer any of his to any ſuch ſufferings, hee will either weaken the flame, or ſtrengthen their faith; he hath promiſed (that, which let vs liue and die in; to wit) that hee will not tempt beyond ſtrength: *And hee is able to* 1 Cor. 10. *doe exceeding abundantly aboue all that we can ſpeake or thinke.*

Aſſure your ſelues, the feare of perſecution is more than perſecution it ſelfe; therefore I ſpeake to your feares, for there is none (through Gods mercie) with vs, I am ſure, to be felt (I thinke) to be feared.

*The ſame night, &c.* That the Lord doth often hold his peole long in ſuſpence, for thoſe things which he meanes to giue them; hee is to our ſeeming ſlow, but ſure; ſure, but ſlow; thus hee was as good as his word to *Abraham*, hee gaue him a ſonne, but hee held him off to the laſt houre; hee kept touch with his poſteritie, brought them out of Egypt, *Doctr.* 3.

Egypt, but he deferred it till the last day; his bond was almost forfeited, yet he paid it before the Sun set, *Exod.* 12. 39. 41. Thus *Ioseph* was long in prison, yet in the appointed time brought forth; and
Psal. 105. 19. *Israel* long in captivitie, prayers were made, and yet
Dan. 9. *Daniel* could heare no answer till night was vpon him; *Iacob* wrestles till day, &c. so also the woman of Canaan, *Matth.* 15. and the Church here: in all which places wee see, that God is mindfull of his day. 2. That hee deferres sometimes till the last houre be running.

*Reas.* The reason of this delay is manifold. 1. God would turne our eyes backward, and make vs say; O it is iust God should deferre me, I haue deferred him; he called and I would not heare; prayed mee againe, againe, and againe, and I would not answer; therefore it is equall I should call and crie, and not be heard.

2. God hereby would sharpen our prayers for the present, therefore he seemes deafe, because wee should speake out; therefore slow, because wee should be earnest; thus *Daniel* interprets it: God deferres him, this is (saith he) but to trie me, therefore he spits vpon his hands, and takes better hold; O Lord forgiue, saith he, O Lord heare, O Lord open, and powres so many petitions, and arguments vpon God, that there is no resistance; thus *Iacob*, hee sees the day comming vpon him, and hee had made nothing of it all night, and therefore now he sets to it, *Goe*, saith he, *I will not let thee goe without a blessing.*

3. Hereby hee prepares vs for the future receiving

uing of his comforts; thus he humbles vs, thus he enlargeth vs, thus fits vs for thankfulneſſe, the more bleſſings coſt vs, the better we will priſe them, and praiſe God for them: adde to this, that theſe repulſes driue vs to further ſearches, as the Iſraelites at *Ai*, and *Gibeah*. Ioſ. 7. Iudg. 20.

Doth the Lord thus long deferre ſometime his intended comforts and anſwers? Let vs know the courſes of his prouidence, and wait vpon him: behold the husbandman waits; when he hath ſowne his ſeed, hee doth not looke to reape and ſow all in a day, his Corne is firſt buried, yea it dies, yea it growes downeward, before it comes vpward, and when it is vp, receiues many a ſnib and checke, yet he waits; And why? becauſe he hath experience: ſo muſt wee, when wee haue ſowne our ſeed; ſay we burie our prayers, ſay to our ſeeming they die, ſay they grow downeward, backward, ſay all things ſeeme to be worſe after prayer with vs than before, yet wait; why, wee haue experience of our owne and other mens ſucceſſe, neuer did men ſow this ſeed, but they had a crop, though a late harueſt, yet a harueſt. *Vſe* 1.

*Ob.* Oh but I haue prayed exceeding long. *Ob.*

*Anſ.* How long? *Iſaack* prayed twentie yeeres for a childe, before he ſped, *Abraham* thirtie; before he ſped; *Abrahams* poſteritie were foure hundred yeeres in captiuitie, before they were deliuered; the Church thirſted for Chriſt, one thouſand, two thouſand, three thouſand yeeres, before they had him: How many thouſands, hundreds, ſcores of yeeres, haſt thou waited? *Anſ.*

*Ob.* *Ob.* O but I haue tried all my friends, vſed all meanes, prayed my ſelfe, and got others to ſpeake too, and yet no helpe?

*Anſ.* *Anſ.* And might not *Peter* ſay as much? not a Chriſtian in Ieruſalem, but had ſpoken, and ſpoken often, and yet he ſtickes.

*Ob.* *Ob.* O but matters with me are worſe and worſe, the more I pray againſt pouertie, the poorer I am; the more I pray for patience, the worſe I am, the more I pray for faith, the leſſe I haue; the more I pray againſt paſſions and temptations, the more they flie in my face.

*Anſ.* *Anſ.* Is not this as we ſaid, that the corne muſt goe backward, before it come forward; was it not ſo with *Abraham* and *Sarah*, the longer they praied, the elder they waxed, and ſo vnfitter for iſſue.

*Ob.* *Ob.* O but my ſinnes grow ſtronger by prayer.

*Anſ.* *Anſ.* Not ſo, thou feeleſt it more than before; it is not becauſe ſinne is ſtronger, but thou ſounder; againe, theſe motions of ſinne, be not motions of life, but ſymptoms of death; as the fowle ſtruggles, and ſprunts moſt when the head is off: the pangs of death be now vpon thy luſts, take comfort.

*Ob.* *Ob.* O but now your comforts come too late, the date is out for me.

*Anſ.* *Anſ.* Why? hath God ſaid pray no more, as to *Ieremie*, hath he ſtopt thy mouth? ſo long as God ſaith, pray; ſo long as the ſpirit within thee ſaith, pray; ſo long as Gods people haue hearts to pray; neuer ſay it is too late to pray: if *Peter* be out by midnight, or by day-breake, it is as well as if he had beene out a moneth before.

*Ob.* O but delayes breakes the heart. *Ob.*

*Anſ.* But note the end of delayes, they are neuer to deny or fruſtrate, but to fit, and to quicken: make theſe vſes of delaies, and then if thy ſute be not honeſt, neuer begin it, if it be, neuer leaue it: learne of husbandmen, when they pull downe a tree, or lift at ſome blocke, if they cannot ſtirre it, they call in helpe, if it come not at the firſt pull, they pull againe, if not then, ha, againe; if not then, ha, once more; at laſt they feele it comming, and then it comes amaine: learne of *Eliah*, hee prayed for raine, hauing prayed, lookes about him, nothing comes; hee prayed againe, nothing comes; hee prayed againe, nothing comes; at length, O Maſter (ſaith his ſeruant) I ſee a cloud, but it is but little; Is it a cloud? then once more to it, and by and by the heauens were masked with clouds: learne of theſe men, *Peter* ſtickes in the dungeon, one lifts, hee cannot ſtirre him; trie you (ſaith hee) to a ſecond, to a third, trie a fourth, a fift, at length heauen ſtirres, the chaines ſtirre, and *Peter* comes in amongſt them: learne of Chriſt himſelfe; the Widdow dealt with a Iudge, not a Father, a bad Iudge, ſhee was alone, a ſimple Orator, yet ſhe prevailes: learne of beggers, they haue no command, no promiſe, no acquaintance, no Art; and yet will ſtand it out; the maſter chides, the begger ſtands it out: the dame chides, hee ſtands ſtill; the ſeruants come, and ſay they dare not ſerue him; the children ſay wee muſt not, and yet hee will not away. O Lord, helpe our faith, how weake be wee, if hauing precept, promiſe, kindred, Gods ſeruants, 1 King. 18. 43. Luke 18.

Gods Sonne on our sides, we will be put off with a delay; well (as I said) so long as a night, an houre, a minute, is left, pray; one night may compasse that which an hundred before could not.

It followeth, *An Angell, &c.*

*Doctr.* 4. The Lord hath euer meanes at hand for his seruants; comfort and deliuerance, if set on worke;

2 Pet. 2. well might *Peter* say, *The Lord knoweth how to deliuer his*, &c. He is neuer at a stand, if they know how to pray, he knoweth how to comfort.

*Reas.* 1. In himselfe he is al-sufficient, infinite in wisdome,

Esa. 40. 5. to inuent meanes; in power, to act them; and if need be, to create more.

2. He is the Lord of Hoasts, the Lord of euery creature; if our worke lie in the Seas, hee is Lord of the Seas; if on the Land, hee is Lord there; if in Prison he beareth the keyes of euery Gaole; if heauens can helpe vs, he commands them; if winds, if beasts, if friends, if strangers, if foes, if Angels; the Lord hath the command of all persons, things, and places.

*Vse* 1. For comfort, roule thy selfe vpon God, cast thy

Psal. 37. 5. care vpon him, he will bring it to passe; is thy burden, pouertie? cast it vpon him, and he will helpe it; is it sinne, feare, sorrow, whatsoeuer it be, he can beare it, and discharge thee?

This Sermon was made in the depth of the dearth. Oh but I see no meanes, I owe so much; so many in my family, and no meanes.

This is as if they should haue said, If we had a friend in the Court, to moue *Herod*; if a friend in the Watch, to bribe him; if in the prison, to see him; then something might be done, but now all

meanes

meanes faile vs. No, no: God hath meanes beyond our ſight, if men cannot doe it, Angels can and ſhall: and if no man will pay the Widdowes debt, God will: if no bodie elſe will feed *Eliah*, the Ra- 2 King. 4.
uens ſhal: what doe we talke of meanes? all means are ſhut vp in God.

*Ob.* O but my caſe is deſperate, it is not poſſible to helpe me. *Ob.*

*Anſ.* Now we ſhall haue a tale of impoſſibilities: And why not poſſible; ſhall any thing be impoſſible to God? *Anſ.* Zach 8. 6.

*Ob.* O but there be an hundred blockes in my way. *Ob.*

*Anſ.* But what is in his way, that makes his way thorow the ſeas, ſtones, wood, iron, &c? goe to the priſon, there is a blocke, a guard; paſſe that guard, there is a blocke, a doore; paſſe the doore, there is another, a chaine; paſſe the chaine, there is another, an iron gate. O but what of this, if they can breake thorow all hinderances of vnbeliefe, diſcouragements to prayer: God will breake thorow theſe and a thouſand more, to their comfort. O but God workes no wonders now. No? his Name is wonderfull ſtill; his power as great as euer, his wiſdome as deepe as euer, his promiſes as good, his loue as much to his as euer, our need as much, our intereſt as good, our Sauiour as good; all things ſtand as before: if wee can vſe former meanes, wee ſhall finde former ſucceſſe, and God will doe abundantly aboue all that we can ſpeake or thinke: wee haue the Lords promiſe for this, *Epheſians* 3. 20. and *Eſay* 42. 16. *I will make darke light,* *Anſ.* Eſa. 43. 16.

Marke our Sauiours collection from Manna to bread. Matth. 4. Deut. 8. 3. Eſa. 9. 6.

*light, and crookednesse straight:* wee haue had our owne experience, let any man that hath had any acquaintance with God and this holy duty, tell mee when prayers were not successefull; when diddest thou euer speake to thy heauenly Father, but he did answer thee with some ease some comfort? When diddest thou euer pray, but thy heart was thereby somewhat lightened? and if thou canst not but say with *Dauid*, in the same day I asked, I was thus farre answered, *That my heart was strengthened*, *Ff.* 139.3. doe not faile to conclude with *Dauid*, *Though I walke in the midst of troubles, yet* (vpon prayer) *I shall be reuiued*, 7. *and God will perfect his mercies in me for euer*, 8.

Psal. 139.3.

Thus wee haue dispatcht some meditations: more wee haue, but they must be only named; as 1. *Herod* would, but could not bring forth *Peter*, to triall and execution: men be but men, and must doe as they may; for what they would doe against the Church, nor they, nor all the Deuils in Hell can doe.

2. The Lord can giue sleepe and peace in any place, at any time, in any company.

3. Gods best seruants and messengers, are sometimes yoaked with vilest offenders, &c.

4. Gods best creatures are the Churches seruants: Angels.

5. Lastly, the Lord can quickly shake his out of their chaines, rags, feares, fetters, &c. But what doe I meane thus to exceed: Brethren I would faine haue you more thirstie of your time, doe you not waste it (as others doe) in idle impertinencies, much

much leſſe in ſurueying States and Kingdomes; It is not for vs to ſit vpon Crownes and Thrones, and to turne Stateſmen; it is for vs to be thankefull where God bleſſes, and to be prayerfull when the Church labours; to this end I haue ſaid thus much; to perſwade you to the practiſe of what you know, now your turne followes, lets ſee what will be done, and how well you will improue time, in ſpeaking to God; rather than to, or of men.

FINIS.

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